I am a member of the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area (UNA-NCA) and a voter from [INSERT STATE/TOWN/ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT]. UNA is a national grassroots advocacy organization with over 20,000 members across the country.

As part of our advocacy efforts, we build support through chapters across the U.S. and at universities to educate on the humanitarian, development, and peace and security work the UN does every day all around the world – work that many Americans often do not fully understand or perhaps are even skeptical about.

In support of that mission, we are here today to tell you that we want to see our country fulfill its shared international duty in regard to refugee resettlement, as promised in the 2016 New York Declaration of which the United States is a signatory. Even more importantly though, we’re extremely passionate about upholding our promise to take in those fleeing violence and persecution and how [Representative Name] can help advance that cause.

In 2016, the U.S. agreed along with all 193 member states of the United Nations to adopt the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. This set of commitments reflect an understanding that protecting those who are forced to flee is a shared international responsibility.¹

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 70.8 million people around the world are displaced. Roughly 25.9 million of them are categorized as refugees, half of whom are children.² Despite these unprecedented numbers of refugees across the globe as of 2017, the U.S. has sharply decreased its refugee admissions.³

There are plenty of reasons to increase our refugee admission numbers:

1. Refugees start businesses which creates job and stimulate economic growth, especially for local communities. In 2015 alone, over 181,000 refugee entrepreneurs generated $4.6 billion in business income across the nation.⁴
2. Over time, refugees own their homes and do not rely on social welfare first provided to them. 73% percent of Burmese refugees and 72% of Bosnian refugees who have been in the U.S. for over ten years live in homes they own.⁴
3. The U.S. made a promise to welcome refugees after failing to admit Jewish migrants fleeing persecution in WWII.⁵ Yet despite a record high number of 70.9 million displaced people around the world, the U.S. has drastically reduced its admission figures to 30,000 people in 2018—the lowest number in modern history.³

¹ "The New York Declaration for Refugees & Migrants" UNHCR
² "Figures at a Glance" UNHCR
³ "Trump to Cap Refugees Allowed Into U.S. at 30,000, a Record Low" Julie Hirschfeld Davis
⁴ "Immigrants as Economic Contributors: Refugees Are a Fiscal Success Story for America" The National Immigration Forum
⁵ "Refugees" Holocaust Encyclopedia
The UN has expressed concerns over the record-breaking numbers of refugees and displaced people around the world. It is imperative that UN Member States work together in order to resettle refugees in a humane and just manner. The refugee admission ceilings from the past two years have decreased by nearly 75 percent and do not reflect America’s tradition of welcoming people fleeing persecution and violence.\(^5\) In order to modernize the state of the refugee resettlement program in the U.S., we must cooperate with the international community and increase refugee admissions.

Furthermore, increasing refugee admissions is not only lifesaving for those displaced, but they further develop the economy for everyday Americans. Many refugees seek economic independence by opening businesses and becoming entrepreneurs. They also combat population decline and spread urban decay. For example, one case study in the “Rust Belt” discovered that refugees generated nearly $295.3 million in economic activity and helped create 1,800 to 2,300 jobs. Refugees also pay their fair share in taxes. Over 20 years, refugees aged 18-45 paid an estimated $21,000 more in taxes. Overall, refugee communities give back to the country that welcomed them and become an integral part of the United States.\(^4\)

**H.R.2146\(^6\)/S.1088\(^7\)**, also known as the GRACE Act, or “Guaranteed Refugee Admission Ceiling Enhancement Act” addresses these concerns by amending the Immigration and Nationality Act to a minimum refugee admission of 95,000 per year. This bill would adjust the nation’s refugee admission figures to match the unprecedented number of displaced people around the world\(^8\), as well as uphold the commitments made in the New York Declaration.

Your office can support these efforts by opposing legislation and executive orders aimed at reducing refugee admissions and voting “yes” on the GRACE Act.

\(^6\) “Tell your Senators: Co-Sponsor the GRACE Act” International Rescue Committee